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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000523

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [MOPS](#) [SU](#) [RW](#) [UG](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: KISEMPIA'S OUTLOOK ON SECURITY THREATS IN EASTERN
DRC

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Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) Summary: Congolese Chief of Defense Forces Lt. Gen. Kisempia Sungilanga Lombe characterized the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) as his biggest security concern in eastern DRC. During a May 3 meeting with DATT and PolOff in his the Ministry of Defense offices, he claimed current operations against the FDLR are a result of the so-called "mixage" process rather than part of any agreement made during the Tripartite-Plus meetings. He downplayed the threat posed by other foreign armed groups operating in the DRC, including the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU). The General's comments indicate that regardless of the size or strength of these armed groups, the Congolese military will not be going after them any time soon. End summary.

¶2. (C) Lt. Gen. Kisempia characterized the FDLR as the military's primary security concern in eastern DRC, adding that the FARDC was now taking steps to eliminate what he called "a difficult problem." He did not provide significant details on ongoing operations against the group in North Kivu (ref A) during a May 3 meeting with DATT and PolOff, but said that some 40 FDLR fighters had been killed, while the FARDC had lost five soldiers. Kisempia said initial operations have cleared most of the main roads in Rutshuru territory of the FDLR, and most of its fighters have fled into adjacent Virunga National Park. He said he hoped to receive logistical and operational support from MONUC to launch "significant" operations in the next two to three months.

¶3. (C) Kisempia claimed the latest fighting against the FDLR is the next phase of the so-called "mixage" process, which combined soldiers loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda with other pro-government troops into five new brigades. He rejected speculation that the FARDC began operations against the FDLR following the Bujumbura and Tripartite-Plus meetings, claiming preparation for the offensives had begun months ago. Kisempia indicated that the "mixed" brigades would be formally integrated into the FARDC following successful operations against the FDLR, although he gave no time frame for this.

¶4. (C) As for the status of Nkunda, Kisempia said questions regarding the dissident general require a political solution, not a military one. Kisempia told us he doubted the GDRC will lift the arrest warrant against Nkunda, as he must answer for atrocities and other acts he committed by his troops, including during the May 2005 attack on Bukavu. Kisempia would not say what he would recommend as a possible solution,

but indicated he would not be in favor of having Nkunda rejoin the FARDC in any leadership capacity.

¶5. (C) Regarding other armed groups in the east, Kisempia assessed ADF-NALU and the LRA as small-scale organizations that pose no risk to his country's security. He said he considered these groups to be "terrorists," but added that neither, nor the FDLR, were threats to the regimes of Uganda or Rwanda. He claimed that the governments of these countries "manipulate" and "exaggerate" the size and abilities of these groups in an attempt to force the DRC to deal with them, rather than developing political solutions to resolve the problems those governments have with the groups themselves.

¶6. (C) Kisempia claimed ADF-NALU consists of no more than 100 or so fighters with few weapons, as joint operations between the Congolese military (FARDC) and MONUC in 2005 killed or dispersed most of its members. The FARDC has not conducted any offensives against the group since then. He said ADF-NALU operates primarily in the northeastern corner of North Kivu province along the border with Uganda, engaging mostly in isolated acts of banditry and harassment, and using force to impose their vision of "law" on the local population. He added that ADF-NALU has also tried to recruit children to fill out its ranks. Kisempia claimed the FARDC is in the initial stages of planning future operations against ADF-NALU to eliminate remaining remnants. He did not give a date certain for such action, and indicated it would not begin until much later in the year.

¶7. (C) Kisempia argued the LRA is also not a major threat from the DRC perspective and stated flatly the group is "not an affair of the Congolese." He said the FARDC has no

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immediate reason to attack the LRA, as its leaders have signed a peace accord with Ugandan officials. He claimed the LRA has no more than 100 members hiding in the remotest sections of Garamba National Park in northeastern DRC along the border with Sudan. Kisempia admitted the DRC will have "work to do" to eliminate such terrorist groups in the future, but he said the LRA does not now endanger the DRC's or Uganda's security interests. In any case, he claimed the FARDC has limited options to pursue the group in its position in the isolated National Park.

¶8. (C) Comment: Kisempia's attitude indicates at the very least that the FARDC will not be taking active measures any time soon against groups it does not consider threats to its own security. His comments downplaying the threats of various foreign armed groups -- while generally containing some truth -- are likely more an indication of Kisempia's disinterest and inability to counter them. This comes as little surprise, given that the army chief's leadership of the FARDC has been marked by significant mismanagement and corruption. End comment.

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